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MUSICAL MONTHLY

KEYNOTES

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Vol. VII. No. 75 AUGUST, 1913 PRICE FOURPENCE

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JOHN ALVEY TURNER, 139, OXFORD STREET, W.

ROYAL COMMAND OF BALALAIKA RECITAL.

15A, Grafton Street, W., *9th July*, 1913.

The Editor of "KEYNOTES."

DEAR SIR,—I have much pleasure in informing you that my Balalaika Orchestra had the honour of performing, by command, before H.M. Queen Alexandra, at Marlborough House, on July 7th.

There were present at the performance, besides H.M., the Dowager Empress of Russia, King Manoel, Queen Amelie of Portugal, H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, Princess Patricia, the Duchess of Fife and her daughters, and very many other distinguished guests.

This command was the direct result of the great success we made the previous day, when we had the honour of performing before the Grand Duke Michael of Russia at his residence, Kenwood, Hampstead.

The Grand Duke expressed his astonishment at Englishmen having been able to so thoroughly reproduce the Russian temperament in music, and he has promised us he would get us a command performance before the King and Queen at an early date.

This Royal recognition should do the Balalaika a vast amount of good, and from our experience in the instrument during the past four years it certainly deserves it.—Yours very truly, CLIFFORD ESSEX.

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PLECTRAL FAMILY RELATIONSHIP.

By "PENNA."

NOT the least interesting subject of study in connection with the Mandoline, Guitar and Banjo family of instruments, is to be found in following the course of their history through the ages, and noting the various phases in which variations of the same type appear in different countries.

We can trace the results of the enterprise of explorer and adventurer, the work of men of commerce and of war, and see how religion and art have made and left their influence as civilization has advanced. From the earliest records of the East—through the gradual development of Europe and so to the present day—the life story of every nation includes proof of plectral music being employed to express its sentiment.

Whilst it is only natural to expect—owing to the work of time and their primitive construction—that comparatively few authentic examples of the very oldest have been preserved, yet, in many instances, there is a distinct family likeness as regards form and character in some in use now and, what is more, the actual names by which they are known are so similar to their progenitors as to be recognised by the most elementary student.

Two examples of present day instruments come to mind, both of which are little known, are easily procurable at exceptionally reasonable prices, are not difficult to learn and could find a place in a Mandoline orchestra.

SPANISH BANDURRIA.

PORTUGUESE GUITARRA.

THE SPANISH BANDURRIA,

a name that at once suggests the "pandura" of the ancient Assyrians, and carries the mind through the Moorish invasion of Spain to the serenaders of the present time. The illustration gives its appearance, and a full description of its construction and tuning will be found in "Turner's Popular Tutor for the Bandurria" (1/6 net). In some respects it retains its old characteristics more than other national instruments—its peg head and gut and silk-covered strings for instance. It has twelve frets and six (double) strings tuned in fourths. The Spanish method gives the notes from G sharp for the lowest to A for the highest, but convenience shows tuning the lowest to F sharp, and so in fourths to G for the highest is preferable as there is less liability of string breakage, five out of the six tunings are to open notes instead of to accidentals, and Mandoline music is playable. An ordinary tortoise shell plectrum of rather small size—or, better still, one of cherrywood—is used, as for the Mandoline.

Its tone is soft and sweet rather than powerful, qualities which commend themselves more perhaps for private enjoyment than the public platform, but as an adjunct to a Mandoline combination the effect would be most desirable, especially where there was a suggestion of "wiriness" apparent.

Another off-shoot of the same family is

THE PORTUGUESE GUITARRA.

Here the scroll head, the wire strings, machine adjustment, and greater number of frets naturally carry us to a later date than the Bandurria. These characteristics show in part the influence of the Italian workmen on the structure of the instrument of the sister country. We have still twelve strings and a flattened body, but the fingerboard is longer and is convex—requiring a slightly arched bridge in consequence.

Also a difference is noticed in the fastening of the strings at their lower end. Whereas in the Bandurria they are looped through the bridge itself (as in the Spanish Guitar and Milanese Mandoline), here they adopt the Italian Mandoline system of being attached to pegs on the *body*. All these points add to the interest of those inclined to study the variations of plectral history seen in different countries.

As in the case of the Bandurria, a good book is available in "Turner's Popular Tutor for the Portuguese Guitarra" (1/6 net), so details may be sought therein if desired, and we may merely note that the tuning in this case is simplicity itself, and would particularly suit those seeking a medium between the Mandoline and Banjo. There are six pairs of strings, the three upper being G, B, D,—as with the Banjo, but an octave higher—and

the lower three pairs also to the same notes but in octaves—that is, one of each pair is an octave below its fellow. This is an arrangement peculiar to the Guitarra and contributes to a remarkably rich tone. Naturally its reading is simple, and the wonder is that it is not more frequently heard. The late George H. Hucke introduced a part for Guitarra in the Banjo, Mandoline and Guitar arrangement of his "Beneath Thy Window," and its adaptability for use in this connection is so obvious that its absence elsewhere is all the more reason for regret.

The Milanese Mandoline, referred to above, is another variant that is rarely heard of. With the knowledge that the appearance of rather out-of-the-way novelties would be appreciated privately, and welcomed in orchestras where they could play a fitting part, there is all the more reason why they should be spared the neglect they seem to suffer from. They would have a distinctly good influence if only a little trouble were taken, and reflect considerable credit on their players.

A RAMBLE.

By Elsa Leigh.

ALTHOUGH summer is with us it is not all who care to take a holiday.

Their happiness, as Douglas Jerrold says, "grows at their own fireside and is not to be picked up in stranger's galleries."

For all real people—all but the shams and snobs—work is life, and they will not discontinue it unless obliged on the score of health. Content with a country ramble, perhaps, in a leisure hour they think out much that will eventually not only benefit themselves but their neighbours.

On familiar experiences (which are as a rule a pleasant theme for meditation), new lights will be thrown. And what about the whimsicalities and foibles of their old friends? Ah! there is something that brings a merry twinkle to the eye and a smile to the lips, for numerous stories of these can be told among the members of the musical profession, once they start it is a case of—well—never knowing when they are going to stop, for the gift of humour is not rare among us.

Then, perchance, the mind will wander in the realm of music, and the sight of the flowers may recall the numerous compositions which are reminiscent of them.

One with a grace all its own is Ethelbert Nevin's "Narcissus," admirably arranged for Mandolin and Piano by the late Herbert J. Ellis, and the name of Ethelbert Nevin naturally brings to mind his world-famous song "The Rosary"—a particular favourite with seaside audiences judging by its continual appearance in band programmes.

The story of its verses is one of strange vicissitudes, and although some of the later editions give it on the cover of the song, the earlier ones do not, therefore it can be repeated here for the benefit of anyone who may not have heard the facts. At the end of 1891 or the beginning of 1892 the words of "My Rosary" were composed by Mr. Frederick George Winter, and the manuscript was sent to a lady. It was never meant for any other eyes. His own copy of them was written in a tiny note book, which one day in the year 1892 he somewhat absent-mindedly placed under the rim of his plate when taking food in a London restaurant and forgot it. When an effort was made to recover it, the little book had completely disappeared and he concluded that it must have been destroyed.

Going to South Africa after the war, dire misfortune was his lot, and on his return to England he was obliged to pass some years in seclusion as an invalid, knowing nothing of the song or of a novel bearing the same title, the author of which was Mrs. Barclay.

It was not until the autumn of 1911, when in a Brighton drawing-room that he had the surprise of his life. Someone was singing the very words he had written so long ago, and which he believed were known to so few, and singing them to particularly beautiful music, *i.e.*, Ethelbert Nevin's setting. When the song was over he turned to the company and said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I am afraid I am going to make a statement which you will find it difficult to believe, but let me tell you that the words of this song were *not* written by this Robert Cameron Rogers. as stated on the front page, but by *me*, and a matter of twenty years ago."

Mr. Winter has never been able to discover what became of the little note book left in the London restaurant, but its contents certainly appeared in 1894-5 in a volume of poems by Robert Cameron Rogers, the Californian poet. As Mr. Rogers and Mr. Nevin are both dead the mystery will never be solved.

Songs and music like this, which are a sort of dedication to idealism, and touch the great heart of the people, must for the moment do much to make them forget that spirit of vindictiveness which is just now holding sway in the name of a great cause. It will not profit women much if they gain the whole world, figuratively speaking, and in the process shatter beautiful ideals.

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ESTUDIANTINA ESPAÑOLA.

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TONE OIL.

NEVER heard of "tone oil"? Well, you would have done if you'd been with the 'Palladium' crowd on tour. Who started it, and who was the victim, won't make any difference, so you needn't know, and it may save trouble. But the facts remain just the same and without making too long a yarn of it, this is how it all came about.

The idea of the Palladium Minstrel Show was to do everything on a big scale, big chorus, big orchestra, plenty of cornermen and, best of all, as far as we were concerned, a big Banjo band. That meant a big slice of trouble because 40 Banjoists wanted some finding, but players of all sorts—good, bad and indifferent—cropped up from all over the country and you know the result, Joe Morley had the selecting and coaching—big success and necessity for another company. Of course there were all sorts amongst them, from old 'pros' with long and varied experience of the business, to gentlemen amateurs anxious to taste the joys of burnt cork bohemianism. But so long as they could play, had a decent Banjo and were teachable, their outside status concerned their director not a little bit. It was when the touring was in full swing that the fun really commenced and this particular plot was developed. Rumours began to spread in the dressing rooms (one in particular) that a certain Banjoist was showing remarkable power in fingering. It wasn't his Banjo so much as his playing. Wonderful strength in plucking and so on. These judiciously placed remarks were never intended of course for anyone in particular—it simply happened "he" overheard them—and a good many times too. At last the bait was taken and a confidential moment—with one of the conspirators as it happened—carried it on. "What do you think it is he does to get this wonderful tone you're all talking about?" "Why! it's a secret, but as you're one of us I'll tell you. It's the "tone oil" he uses." "Tone oil—what's that?" "Oh, some stuff he's got in a bottle, has it made up for him specially, uses it for his fingers and it makes them hard like nails. He won't let anyone else get hold of the bottle though." Next day while some of the 'crowd' were down on the stage for their turn, a casual glance on a table in a corner revealed an ordinary looking medicine bottle—partly covered by a coat—and containing a creamy looking, thickish fluid. Strange enough it was, that the only other occupant of the room at the time should be the confidant of the day before, and *his* attention was soon directed to the discovery. With an excited "Why, that's it, that's the stuff he uses for his fingers—seen him go in a corner many a time with a bottle like that, but could never get hold of it, though I should know the smell right enough because he spilt some once. Nearly full too, this is." A conveniently empty bottle—time to take a generous sample—"in the interest of Banjo players the world over"—the tempter's work is quickly through and a clause of the the decalogue broken once more. . . . . I suppose it *was* retribution, because he was really no good for playing for several days after that, fingers flabby and greasy and blistered more than ever. The climax came with a report from an analytical chemist, who coldly acknowledged receipt of fee, and mixture, and stated that the result of his investigation proved the latter to be a mixture of castor oil, alum, and powdered chalk.

And there's no demand for "Tone oil" after all.

H. M.

LEGER LINES.

Wedding bells were ringing on Saturday, July 12th, at the marriage of Miss Weaver, daughter of Mr. Alfred Weaver of Upper St. Martin's Lane, to Mr. Charles Rogers, so well known to Banjoists the world over as one of England's best, and to Londoners in particular, as the 'hurricane' player. With the Banjo element so doubly in evidence we need not fear any slacking in enthusiasm when 'Master Charlie' settles down to married life—of which we wish a long spell with much happiness and prosperity.

✣ ✣ ✣

A fire on July 5th, at Albert Rooms Whitfield Street, W., might have made a material difference in our publishing arrangements had it extended to the cellar beneath—rented by J. A. Turner—where are stocked some thousands of metal plates and almost untold numbers of books and sheet music. Fortunately the fire was suppressed, although some considerable damage was done by water.

✣ ✣ ✣

Mr. F. W. Collins, who has for many years featured the Banjo in Napier, N.Z., has removed to Wellington.

✣ ✣ ✣

"Billy" Richardson, one of the old stagers in the minstrel business, has just passed away. Only recently he appeared with the Palladium Minstrels at "Olympia," Liverpool, and received quite an ovation from those who remembered him with Hague's Minstrels in that city.

✣ ✣ ✣

Olly Oakleys "Humoresk's" are booked for Fleetwood (Pavilion), August 4th; Blackpool (North Pier), 11th; Manchester (Rusholme), 18th; Bradford 25th—weeks following each date given.

BANJOISTS AND THE MINOR TRIAD.

By T. T.

TO sit down at this time of the year in an endeavour to write upon the above, candidly, is an effort, for it is certainly not the most inviting of subjects. However, a conviction that the minor triad position is one of the most useful we have, and an opinion that its uses are not fully appreciated by the average Banjoist, must be my apologia for drawing attention to it.

At the same time I may be excused if I venture to think that all true "KEYNOTERS" of the Banjo persuasion, more or less interestedly peruse its columns in which even a suspicion of Banjo matter can be found.

Now, one of the principal requirements for any advanced degree of skill in Banjo playing, is the ability to readily "position" the various musical passages. This demands not alone a competent knowledge of the fingerboard, but necessitates an appreciation of the relative position of the notes, and the power to read in phrases, as well as acquaintance with the major and minor modes.

How very useful the "barre" is in numberless passages. It is, in fact, most commonly used by all writers and composers. Next, perhaps, we have a modification in the "position barre," which is also very often used, and is made in various ways.

Similarly there is another, usually dealt with as a "position," and rightly so, but which can also be looked upon as a modification of the "barre." For want of a better name I call it the position of the "minor triad," inasmuch as the 2nd, 1st and 3rd fingers of left hand are placed on the 3rd, 2nd and 1st strings respectively, and prepare them for a common minor chord at any fret.

Take the key of "A" minor just to illustrate; place 1st finger (L.H.) on 1st fret of 2nd string, 2nd finger on 2nd fret of 3rd string, and 3rd finger on 2nd fret of 1st string, this gives us the required chord. Keeping the fingers in relative position, this minor chord in various keys can be had on any fret, and it is surprising how often passages occur where it can be introduced with advantage, simplifying fingering of both left and right hands.

The fact that such a position leaves only the 4th finger free for actual work need not be considered a drawback, as it is only one of many means to the desired goal of simplification; besides, if that 4th finger is not up to the mark equally with the others it will help to make it so.

It is not necessary to go back very far to prove its usefulness, although I first came across a reference to it in an article in "KEYNOTES" some few years ago, which dealt with the doings of a picturesquely attired Banjoist whose name I cannot just now recall. I tried it then in a casual sort of way, but with time I have become more impressed with its utility and handiness, and find that it is introduced into most of the recent works of Mr. A. D. Cammeyer, Mr. Joe Morley, Messrs. Olly Oakley and Emile Grimshaw, all of whose names are well known to readers of this and other journals devoted to matters banjoistic.

To refer to at least one of the recent works of the above where it is directly introduced, or can be introduced as an alternative fingering to that shown. Take first, one of Mr. A. D. Cammeyer's latest published solos, "Dancer's Dream," which without doubt is one of the most unique things he has done. This solo all the way through bristles with this "minor triad" used in company with diminished fifths and perfect fourths. It is also to be met with in many other solos bearing his name.

Next examine Mr. Joe Morley's "Oddity." Here it figures largely, particularly in the 2nd movement and its repetitions. Again in his "El Contrabandista" it can well be introduced in at least one instance as a variation to the fingering shown in my copy. I refer to the only passage marked 15th position, and having tried it in the 16th (minor triad) position, making the thematic notes of the passage (F, E-flat and D) with the little finger of the left hand. I find when I arrive at "C" (made on 17th fret) that the hand is in shape to drop an octave to the 4th position where the "C" minor chord again appears. The close observer will also again find it in his "Camptown Carnival."

"Fernbank Quickstep," by Mr. Olly Oakley contains a passage to which this minor triad position can well be adapted. Take the 3rd bar of the solo and we find B, D, G, as a triplet, marked to be played on open strings. To some this will not be found easy, followed by a return to F sharp and E, so try the triplet in the 3rd position, and simultaneously place the 3rd finger on the 4th fret, 1st string. It will be seen that the fingers of the left hand are then in place for the triplet referred to, and by merely removing the 4th finger from the string, the F sharp is already made, while the E can also be made on the 5th fret of 2nd string. It may also be observed that the bar following can conveniently be played without any shift of position, while the right hand work lays better under the fingers. Another passage where all four fingers may be used in this fashion occurs a little further on in the 8th position.

In Mr. Emile Grimshaw's works the position here dealt with is used to a very tolerable degree.

Take his "Return of the Regiment" and a small but interesting variation to the fingering marked in the 9th, 10th and 11th bars of the movement in "F," can be had by using this "minor triad" position. The theme in the bars mentioned is made up of "B flat," "A," "B flat," and "C" (bass string), accompanied by "C" and "E" on 2nd and 1st strings, and assuming the minor position in the first place dispenses with any movement of the left hand, except raising the 4th finger from the "B flat," and replacing it after making the "A," when we find ourselves in position for the 11th bar.

A similar effect with the same notes in different order is found also in this composer's "Beat of the Drum" in the 6th and 7th bars of the introduction, and its repetitions. I am almost tempted to deal with other of his pieces wherein I have found the position even of greater use than the instances here quoted, but I am reminded of my original intention to quote only one piece by each of the writers I have named, which intention I am afraid I have already exceeded.

These are only a few instances which have come under my own observation, and I daresay other "KEYNOTERS" have come across many others. Personally, I commend the "Minor Triad" position to all Banjoists as just one of the means whereby the ounce of thought will save many an hour of practice at an awkward passage if attempted to be played as marked.

CLASSICAL COMPOSERS FOR THE MANDOLINE.

By R. HARRISON.

THE greatest *maestri* have written for our favorite instrument. The mighty Handel composed for the Mandoline. In his "Alexander Balus" we find that the song "Hark! Hark! he strikes the Golden Lyre," had accompaniments for the Organ, Flute, Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Bass, Harp and Mandoline. Mozart, who had probably heard the instrument in Italy, evidently appreciated it. The very beautiful obbligato to "Deh Vieni," was written for the Mandoline, and Berlioz very properly protested against the Violins being played pizzicato to imitate it. Professor Manuel Garcia informed the writer that Garcia Père, the great tenor singer, always employed the Mandoline. There are two exquisite sonatinas by Beethoven expressly composed for Krumpholz, a Mandoline virtuoso and friend of the great master. Among the relics of Beethoven, now happily brought together, there is a Mandoline. We may imagine, with much truth, that this "father of music" often found solace in his Mandoline. Verdi also did not forget the Mandoline; the serenade in "Otello" has a Mandoline accompaniment. Boito has also introduced it in his opera of "Mefistofeles."

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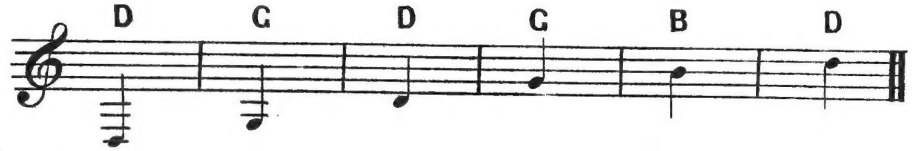
SPANISH FANDANGO.

Tune the Guitar as follows and play as if tuned in the ordinary manner.

Allegro.

GUITAR.

5.B. Open.

7.B. Open. 4.B. 5.B. FINE.

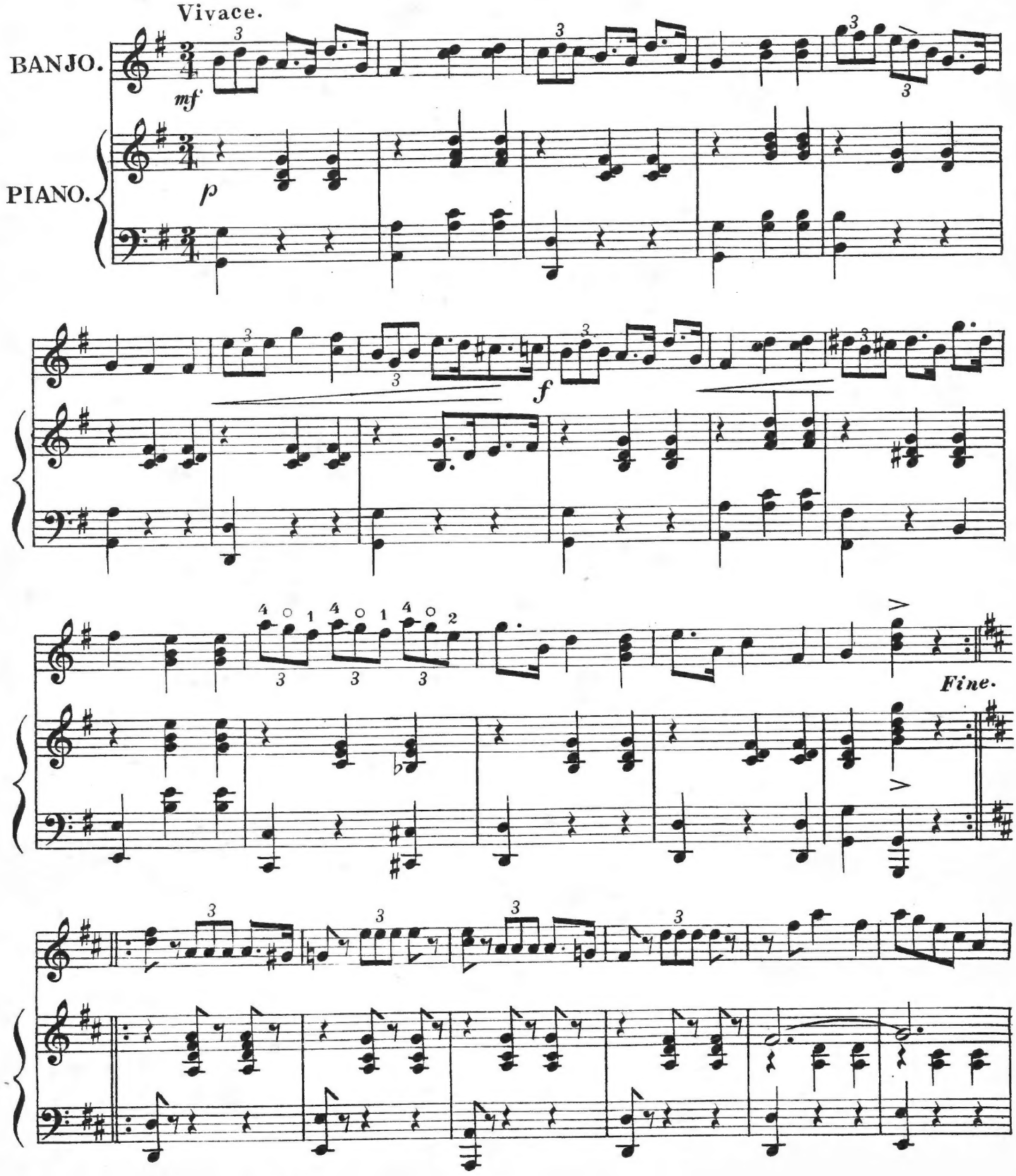
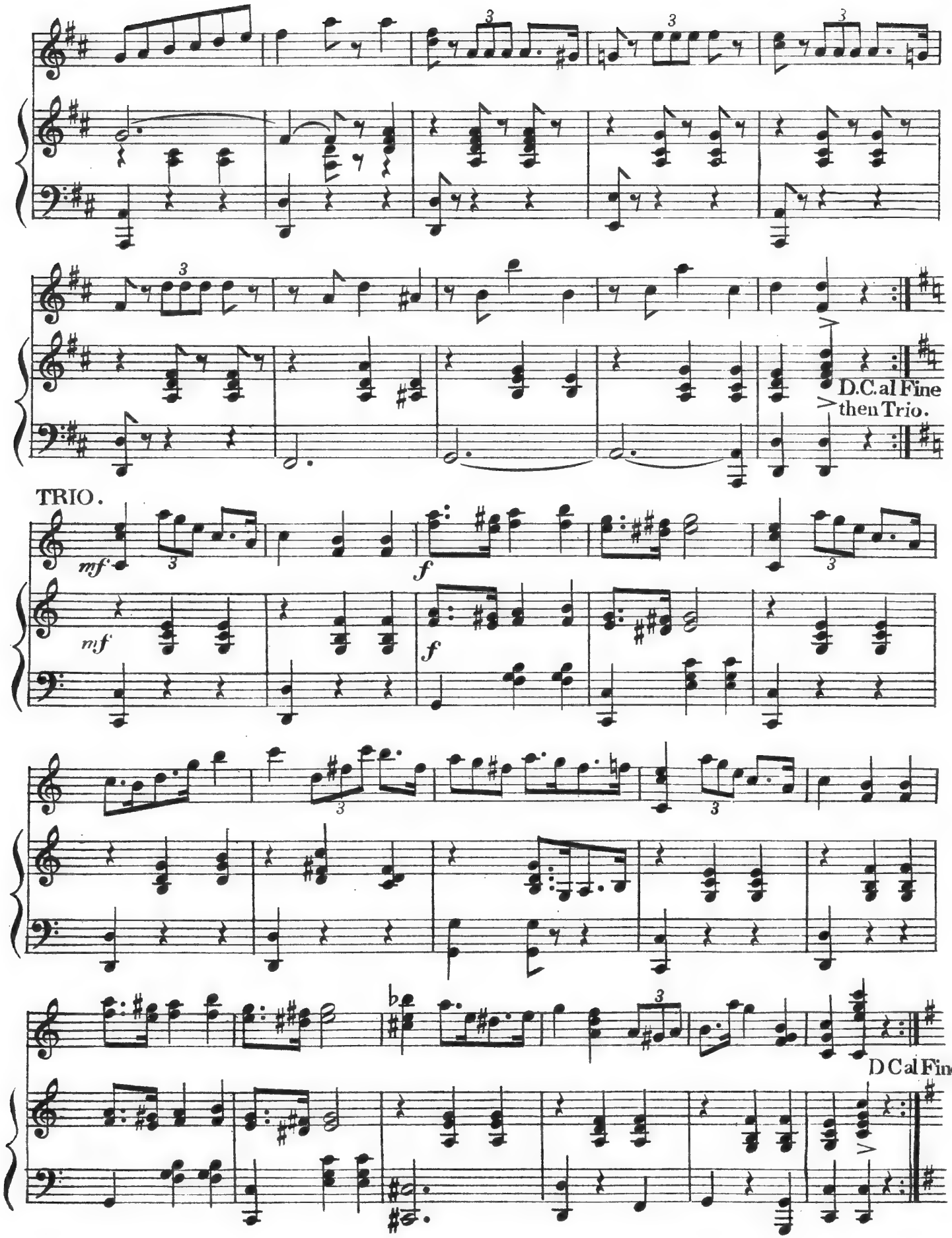
Variation.

5.B. 7.B.

Open. 4.B. 5.B. D.C. al Fine.

COON REVELS.

MAZURKA.

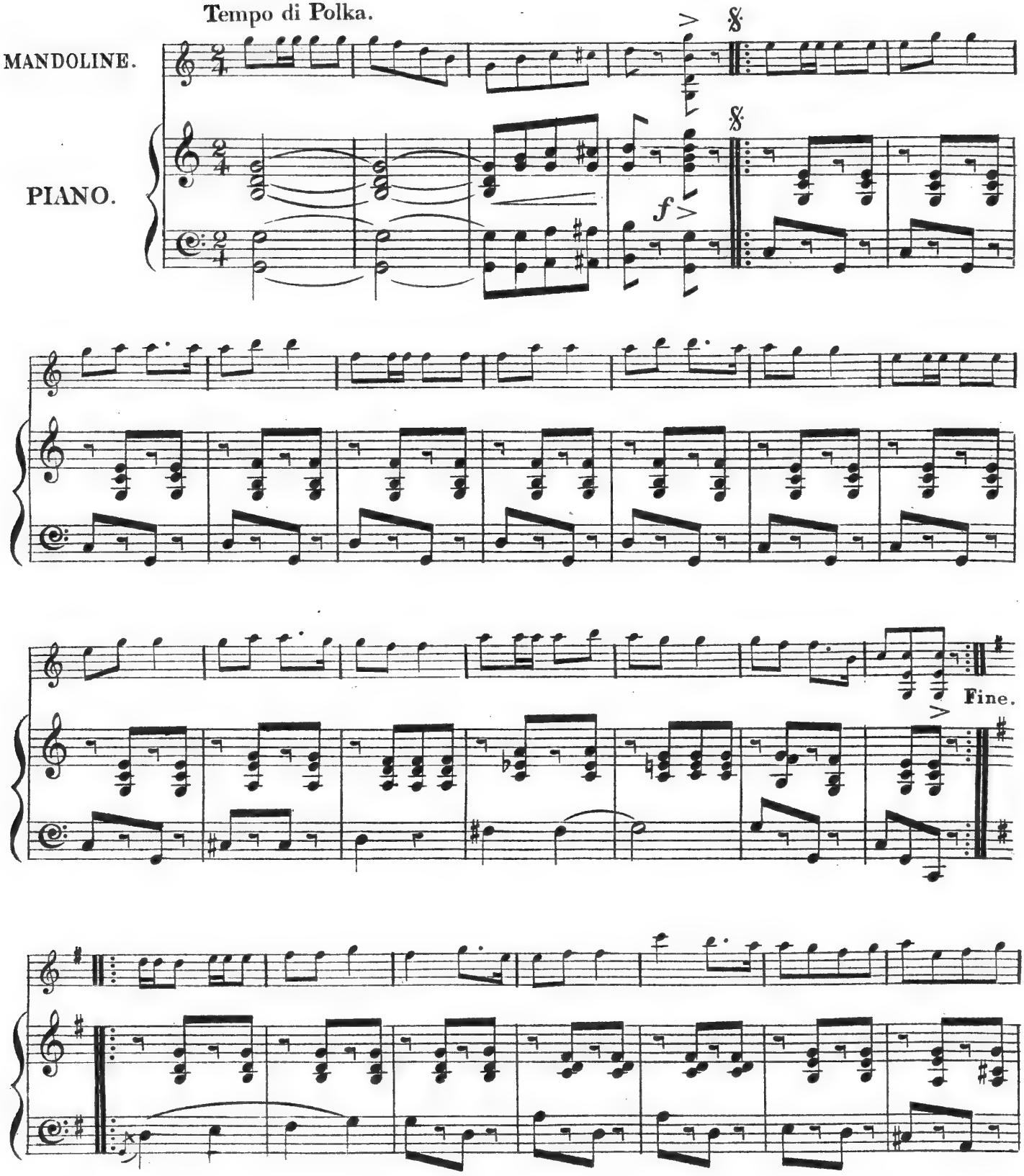
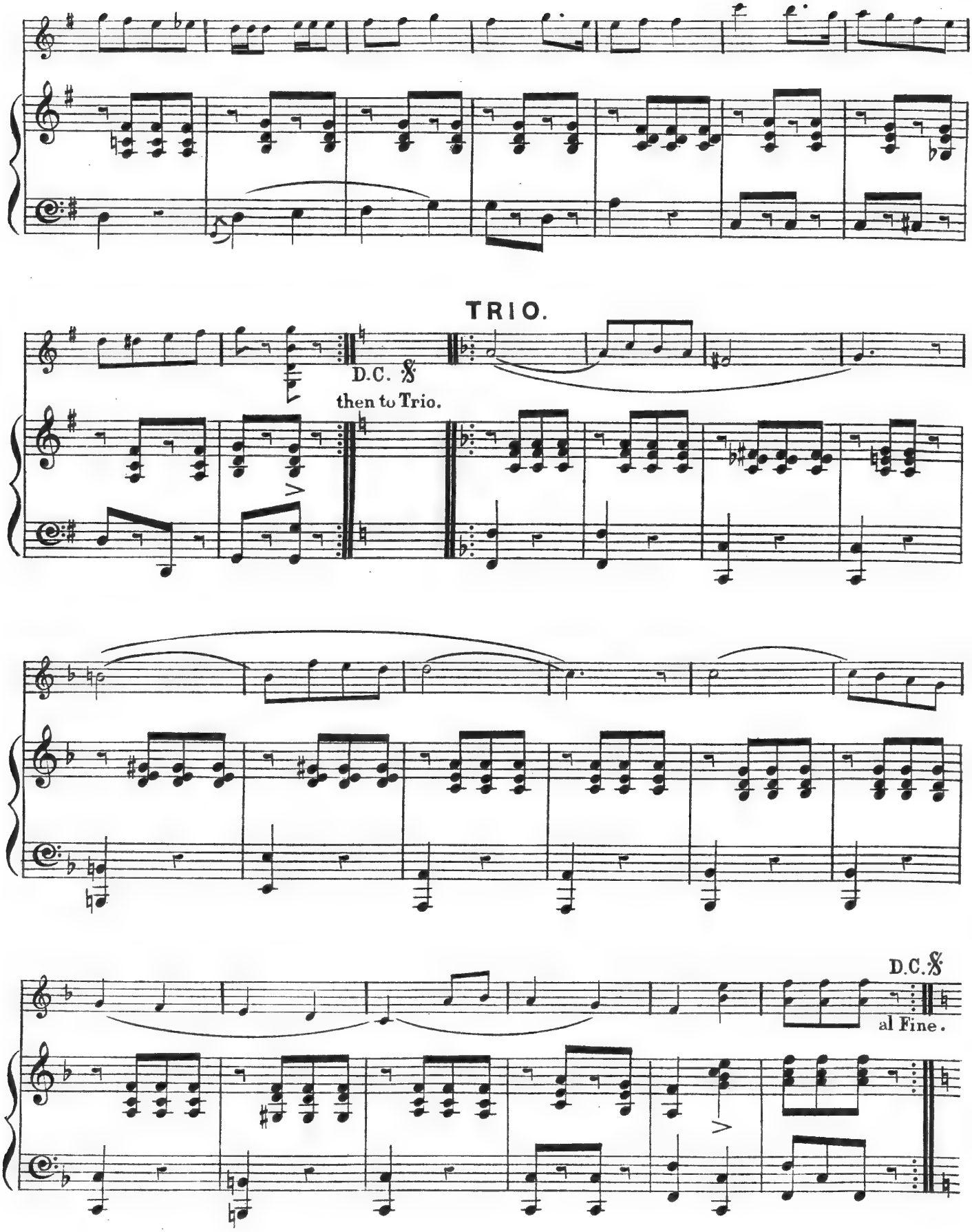
Fred CONWAY.

D.C.al Fine
then Trio.
TRIO.
mf
f
mf
f
D.C.al Fine

PEARL POLKA.

HERBERT J. ELLIS.

Intro:
Tempo di Polka.

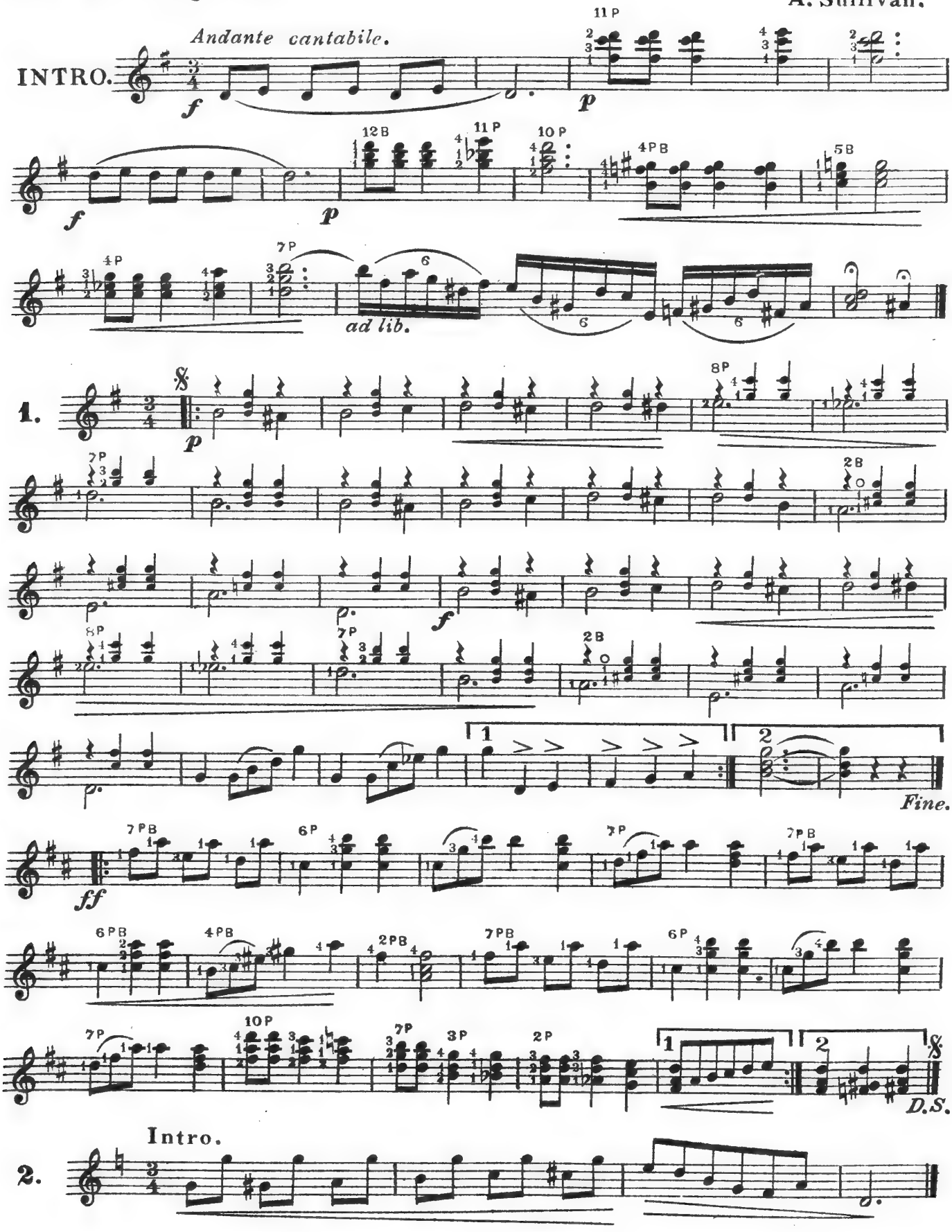
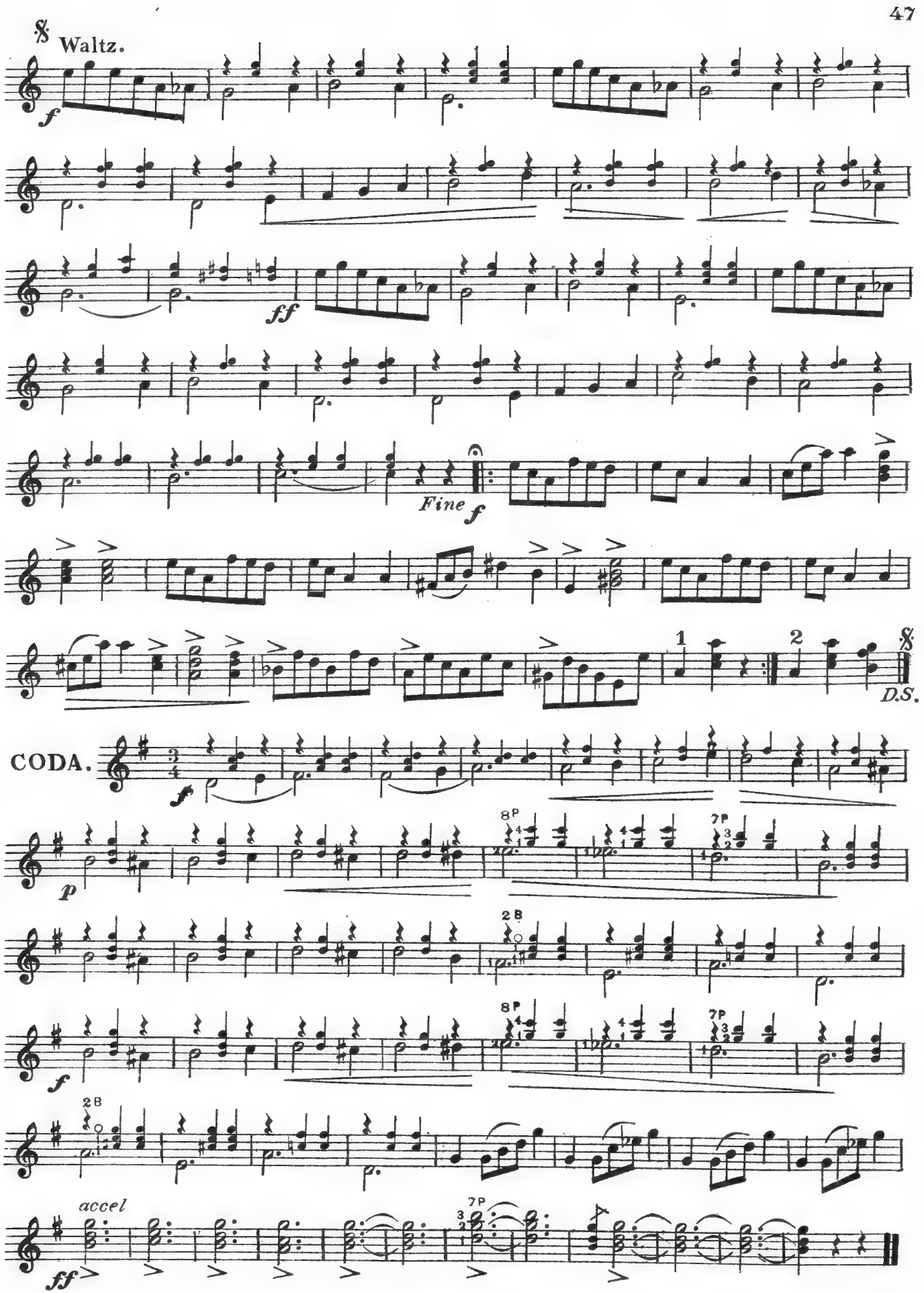
MANDOLINE.

PIANO.

TRIO.
D.C. 𝄋
then to Trio.
D.C. 𝄋
al Fine.

WESTCLIFFE.

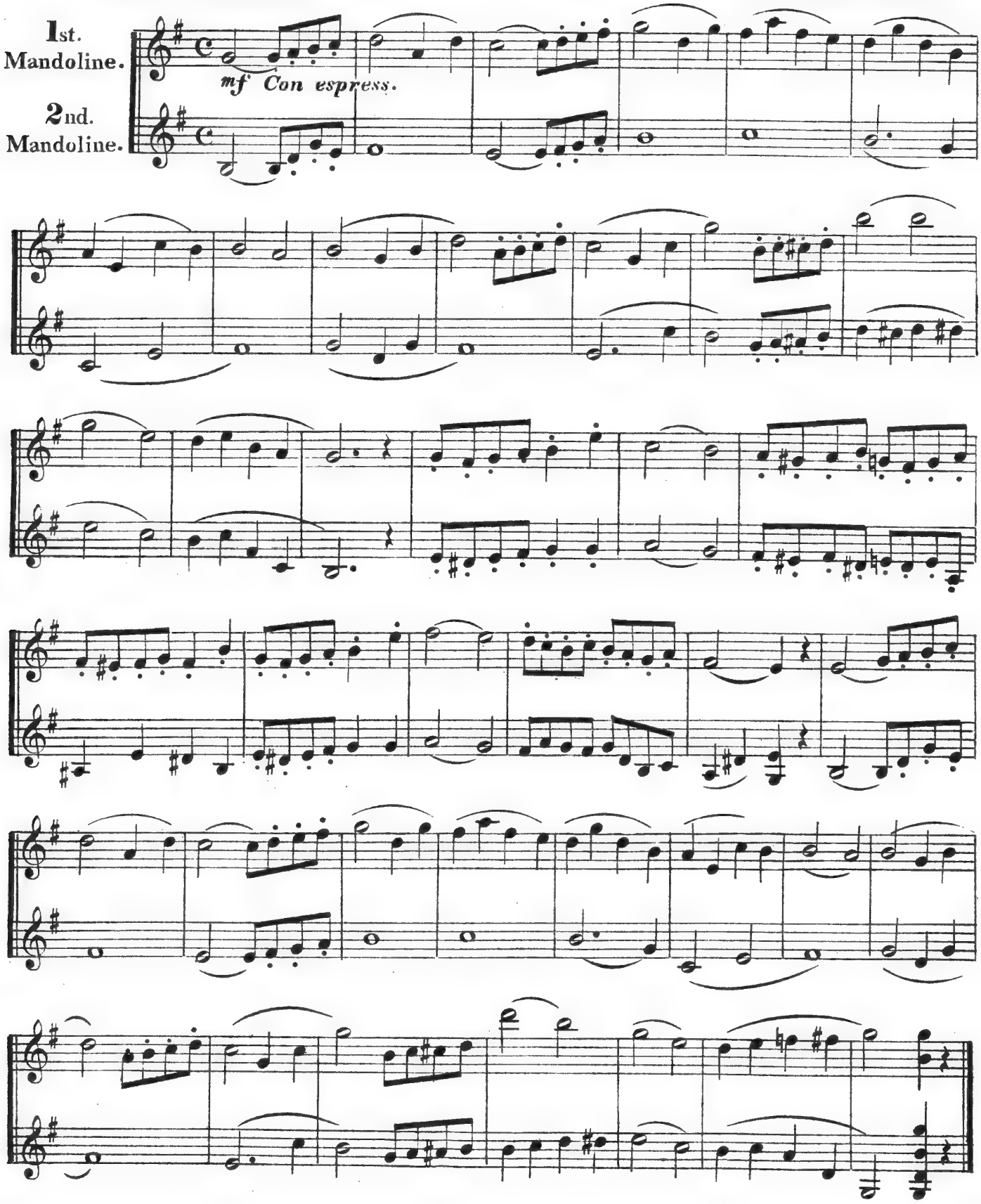
WALTZ.

Tune 4th string to D

A. Sullivan.

Waltz.
f
ff
Fine
f
1
2
D.S.
CODA.
f
p
8P
7P
2B
f
2B
8P
7P
accel
ff
7P

ARIA GRAZIOSO.

TWO MANDOLINES.

R. CLIFFORD.

CONCERTS.

LONDON, S.E.—The well-known combination, the Aston Banjo Club, were in good form at the concert given in the Great Central Hall, Tower Bridge Road, on 7th June last, where they provided a considerable portion of the programme in aid of the camp and general funds of the Boys' Life Brigade, 15th and 23rd London Companies.

A magnificent audience was present, and encores were the rule until time precluded more.

Preceding the concert was an Organ recital by Mr. Fred. C. Welling, of St. Michael's, Bromley, E.

Mr. Harry Marsh, as usual, conducted the orchestra, and among their selections were "Talisman" Overture (*Hill*), "Love and Beauty" Waltzes (*Armstrong*), Intermezzo "Huckleberry Finn," "Memories of the Past," "Butterfly," and "Rugby Parade."

Banjo quartettes were contributed by Miss B. Joyce and Messrs. F. Burtenshaw, G. Ovenden and S. A. Payne, and much appreciated.

Mr. L. Legrand gave splendid renderings of Morley's famous Banjo solos, "Camptown Carnival" and "Chrysanthemum."

Zither Banjo Duets, "Humoresque" and "Miniature III." (*Cammeyer*) were rendered by Mr. F. Ackerman and Mr. Bert Whittingham.

Songs were given by Miss Elsa Worthy, Miss M. Barlow, Mr. J. W. Alderson and Mt. William Edmunds.

Recitals by Miss Gertrude Cooper, and concerted numbers by the Athelstan Male Quartette completed an excellent programme.

✣ ✣ ✣

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.—The Christchurch Mandoline Orchestra gave their twelfth Grand Concert on June 12th, and from the reports to hand proved entirely successful. The instrumentation now numbers 30 performers:—6 First Mandolines, 4 Second Mandolines, 3 Tenor Mandolas, 3 Mandocellos, 2 Mandobasses, 3 First Banjos, 4 Second Banjos, Guitar, Harp Guitar, Flute, Clarinet, and Drum. The programme included selections from "William Tell" and "The Mikado," "Crusader Overture," and "Darkies' Dream" by the Orchestra, Banjo Solo by Mr. D'Arcy Wright, Mandocello Solo by Mr. Joseph Wright, and a Plectrum Quartette, besides vocal items.

✣ ✣ ✣

MAIDENHEAD.—Senor Obregon's Estudiantina Espanola Concert Party was engaged for the Mayor and Mayoress of Islington's Garden Party on Friday, July 18th, and gave a varied programme of instrumental, vocal and dance numbers for the enjoyment of the many guests present. During the same week similar engagements were filled at Redbourn, Erpington and Byfleet.

OFF TO CANADA.

THE remark that "Canada's gain is England's loss" was again brought home on Thursday July 24th, when we wished good luck to the brilliant young Banjoist, George E. Morris, sailing that afternoon for Quebec, *en route* to Winnipeg, where he is taking up a commercial post, and carries the best wishes of a large circle of friends. Needless to say he intends filling as many engagements with his Banjo as can be arranged, and those who have heard him will have no doubt but that his ability in this direction will be welcome and well recognised, while pupils should not be lacking when it is known that a favourite of Joe Morley—with that famous master's methods well instilled—is amongst them.

George E. Morris is the kind of man we are sorry to miss. Twenty-two years of age, a good allround athlete who has scored with honours in boxing, running and cricket, of a genial disposition, full of energy and ambition, his is the type that should make its way in the world. As another pioneer in the Banjo interest we could hardly send a better man, and that he will do credit to the old country is a fixed determination we feel sure he will live up to.

The farewells were preceded by a Banjo evening at 139, Oxford Street, where the "parting guest" received a cheery send-off from a number of his friends, including colleagues in the Palladium companies. Amongst them were, of course, Joe Morley, and Harry Stafford (late musical director of "B" company), to whose wonderful memorising of accompaniments we all paid tribute. Altogether the event is not likely to be forgotten, for master and pupil and all concerned seemed determined that the occasion demanded the best, and plenty of it.

✣ ✣ ✣

EDMONTON (ALTA.)—Mr. J. P. Cunninghame finds keen audiences for his Banjo in his new home, and writes us that "the 'Jo goes great out here." He recently gave a recital at the Picture Palace, Regina, and specially notes the success of "El Contrabandista," "Chrysanthemum," and "Palladium March"—three of Morley's latest—and Grimshaw's "Dream Song."

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WANTED—SOME NEW COMPOSERS.

By A. DE VEKEY.

WITH a reasonable prospect of a very busy season before us, the question arises as to whether we are as well equipped as we might be to meet the demand. In one respect, I am personally inclined to think we are *not*.

We will, of course, have the usual excellent output of Banjos by the different makers, with possibly some improvements (minor or otherwise remains to be seen), more Banjo concerts may be given, the instruments will be heard in concerted numbers at many of the big places of entertainment as never before, and the few Banjo composers we have may have to work harder than ever to keep the game going.

So far so good. But it is in the dearth of really good composers that we fall short. Clever and prolific though composers for any instrument may be, there *is* the possibility of their works bearing a "sameness" difficult to disguise. Hence the necessity for continually ferreting out and encouraging new talent in this direction.

Although at present not featured much as Banjo solos, it seems to me that the valse movement is not sufficiently exploited for the instrument. Many say they do not care for them on the Banjo, yet it nevertheless lends itself admirably to a valse movement. In fact, many of the popular valses played from the Piano copy suit the instrument splendidly, thus proving that it is capable of effectively rendering this style of movement as well as the other kind to which the term "characteristic" is applied.

Of course, the percentage of Banjo players who can transcribe easily from the Piano copy is very small, so to the many there is not much hope of an increased repertoire, save through the usual channels—the publishers of Banjo music.

It is possible that this article may draw forth the comment from some publisher that already there is a big selection of Banjo solos on the market, some of them well tried successes. That is so, but it, nevertheless, is an unassailable fact, that a good proportion of these do not appeal to the advanced amateurs of to-day, who most probably at some time or another, have purchased what to them represents the "pick" of a particular catalogue. Therefore the present chief need would be plenty of new solos. If these are not forthcoming, there is a danger of interest flagging, only to be spasmodically revived when new interesting solos come their way.

On the other hand, there are plenty of young players to whom the music discarded by the advanced amateur would prove instructive and interesting for some years, but in the process of time the young player would creep into the advanced ranks, when the want would be felt for that prompting these notes. Therefore, in the natural order of things, the player who at one time will find plenty to hold his interest from any catalogue, must, if he sticks to his studies, merge into the position of the advanced player, who is a very valuable asset to the industry, and one whose enthusiasm it is in everyone's interest to sustain.

The competition suggested some little time ago in "KEYNOTES" seemed an excellent idea, though apparently nothing has matured to date in the matter. Various ideas in connection therewith have at different times cropped up, some of which, when looked at from certain standpoints, have presented difficulties that have resulted in their being turned down as impracticable. An idea struck me recently in which the teachers could co-operate as it were. Moreover, it seems to me quite feasible and easy to put into execution.

It, no doubt, will stand revising, but at any rate here it is—pending the appearance of something better.

Let each of the Banjo publishers through their trade organs invite composers to send in original solos by a certain date, at the same time making either a cash or royalty offer to the composers whose solos are chosen, the same to be positively featured at some concert or entertainment given by the accepting house during the season.

Particulars as to the method of selecting the prize solos to avoid favoritism could be drafted out as per the ideas of each house.

Each paper would reach a certain section of readers, and if the winnowing process resulted in the discovery of even just a *few* good composers, it surely would be well worth while. As to how the teachers could co-operate, the following is suggested:—

Let each publisher get a letter stencilled and sent round to the principal teachers, with a "tear off slip" for them to sign, in effect, that they will each guarantee to take as a first order (at a special rate to be determined), say at least 100 copies assorted of the winning solos, from any house they care to select. For instance, the option to be, that if they cared they could place an order for 50 copies with two houses, or anyhow they wish so long as they take 100 copies.

Surely, at the least, say a couple of dozen teachers could be found to guarantee to take 100 on these conditions. This would indicate to the publishers that some practical interest is being shown, and would mean, that as soon as they are printed, a matter of 2,400 copies would be in the hands of different teachers all over the

country for immediate circulation among their pupils, thus paving the way for the publishers to reap an early return for the expense incurred. I would suggest that each of the trio instruments be catered for, and, perhaps, even a solo or two for the "deeper" instruments, and if for the latter, let us have them in absolute pitch, treble reading, which is infinitely more satisfactory than the transposing method.

I am sure that several Banjo, Mandoline and Guitar players with a distinct penchant for composition would be found.

Now, will some house take some initiative, and try to unearth some latent talent which undoubtedly exists somewhere?

[Mr. de Vekey's pen has been resting so long that his suggestion is doubly welcome. With much that he writes every lover of the instruments referred to will be in agreement, and we should be the last to appear to throw cold water on a scheme which would in any way benefit the cause in which we are all concerned. There are however, in this as in most other matters, two sides to be considered, and the commendable enthusiasm of the teacher must be met by the colder calculations of the publisher, based on the experience the latter has gained and the existing conditions.

Although in a general way their interests are identical in that the object of both is to further the cult of the instruments taught, yet there is a parting of the ways when it comes to actual details, and here it is soon recognised that what one thinks would be to the advantage of the other may not be so when put to the test.

Writing from the publisher's point of view several notes are suggested. First is the all important one, that it is *not* what he frequently thinks must and will sell because of its intrinsic value that catches favour. If success could be assured on merit alone, the street boys would have different tunes to whistle, and nine-tenths of the inanities that we now hear would not spoil good paper. Neither is success a commodity that can be treated on a commercial basis. A hundred pounds has often been paid for a composition which has proved an utter failure, while the callow effort of an amateur anxious to see his name in print has been known to reap a substantial income. It is just simply and absolutely a matter of public opinion or taste, and can no more be divined or depended on than the weather a month hence. There are, of course, some guides to go by, some sureties that save to a certain extent. A well known composer's work is bound to sell if only with his particular following, but, on the other hand, in a direction that is already well catered for, a new writer will require a fair amount spending in advertising before his work will be even looked at. One of the worries of the publisher's office is the amateur who wants to know exactly what *is* wanted, so that he may supply the demand—just as if the publisher couldn't get as much as he needed from professional sources if he only knew himself. And as far as competitions are concerned the catalogue of John Alvey Turner contains at least two numbers which were adjudicated prize winners—one a Banjo solo included in a catalogue purchased some years ago, and of which it might safely be said that not a single copy has been sold for—well, ten years; and the other a song which won a good cash prize offered by a well-known weekly paper, and was purchased outright (with dozens of others) to be used in another way altogether. In its original form it was worth the metal of its plates.

While it is true that a publisher who also controls a periodical has the best possible medium for advertising his productions to its readers, he must also consider his outlook in a wholesale direction—the music trade generally who will only make up stock according as their judgment prompts them, which generally means that works by unknown writers are viewed with icy indifference. It certainly *sounds* very well to hear of teachers ordering 100 copies at a time of new numbers—but where are those teachers? Honestly, if publishers could be sure of meeting *half-a-dozen* even (to say nothing of a larger number) the output would be a very different story.

What really happens is, that teachers expect specimen copies to be sent them at a nominal price—or free samples sometimes—to try over. If the composition suits their requirements for tuition purposes an order may result, but how many will take even a dozen of a new piece of which the writer is unknown and concert audiences are innocent.

The idea that our prominent writers may perhaps repeat themselves is a contingency that may arise, but why anticipate what may never appear? The best have too great a reputation to risk, and the knowledge that they have a following eager to take all they produce because it is known there will be no chances of it being unplayable. Publicity is the prime factor in success, and many causes have to contribute before it is reached.

This is not said with any idea of chilling the ardour of new writers—it will not do that—on the contrary, fresh compositions are always welcomed and carefully examined. A competition might very well be arranged and reveal fresh talent, in which case every player may be amply assured beforehand that no one would be better pleased than the fortunate publisher. Let us have *your* suggestion.—*Ed.*, KEYNOTES.]

CORRESPONDENCE.

E. H. T. D. writes:—"Your magazine is of inestimable value to a Banjo player, and although I have been playing for one year only I must say that I have received a great deal of assistance from its pages, not to mention, of course, the pleasure of reading, and I sincerely trust that your other readers may receive as much benefit and pleasure, and find the magazine as interesting as I have done.

With best of wishes from Sunny Napier, a place where the sun always shines.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

Reply to C. S. (Oudtshoorn).—The difference in construction between the "ordinary" and "Zither" Banjos naturally accounts for a distinct difference in tone. An "ordinary" Banjo fitted with wire strings is more metallic in quality and sacrifices its mellow tone for loudness, whereas a Zither Banjo fitted with gut strings is too muffled or muted to give a satisfactory effect.

Experiments have resulted therefore in improvements made in both styles—the size of the vellum in each case in accordance with its stringing, and other details in construction, and, of course, to produce the correct tone of either there is quite a distinct method of playing. But this more concerns the concert artiste than the amateur.

The name "Zither Banjo" was given because the quality of the tone resembled the German Zither—to distinguish it from the ordinary Banjo tone produced by gut strings.

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BERCEUSE (*F. Bohr*). Although quite recently produced in the "Mandolinist" Series (No. 580), this exceptionally attractive number is fast becoming a favorite with concert performers. In addition to the parts already arranged by B. PERSICHINI for 1st and 2nd Mandoline and Guitar, others have been made by G. SGALLARI for:—

Tenor Mandola, Bass Mandola, and Mandocello.

DEATH OF ASE from "PEER GYNT" (*Grieg*). This well known *motif* has been most effectively scored by PHILIP J. BONE (Conductor of the famous Luton Mandoline Band), whose experience in this direction places him in the position of being an authority on the best instrumentation. Parts are for:—

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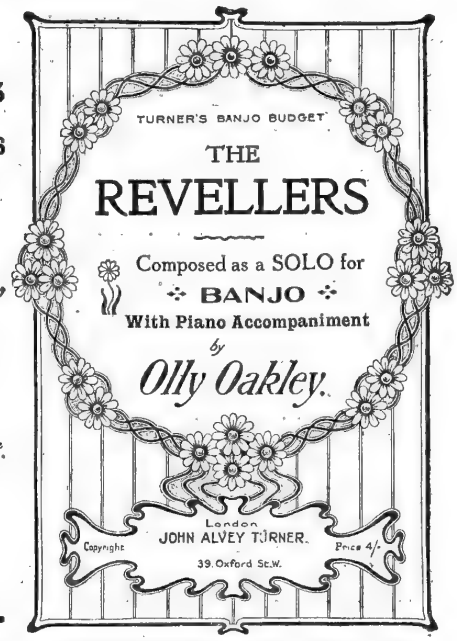

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,,	No. 565	"ROMANCE APPASSIONATA"	*F. Winslow*
,,	No. 571	"RIMEMBRANZE VALSES" -	*B. Persichini*
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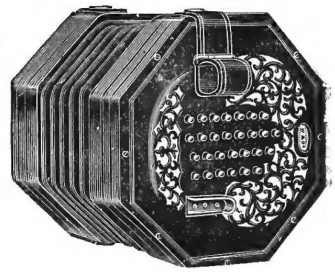

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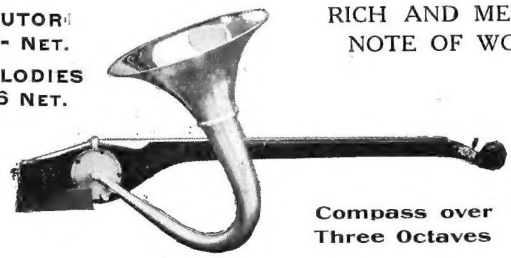

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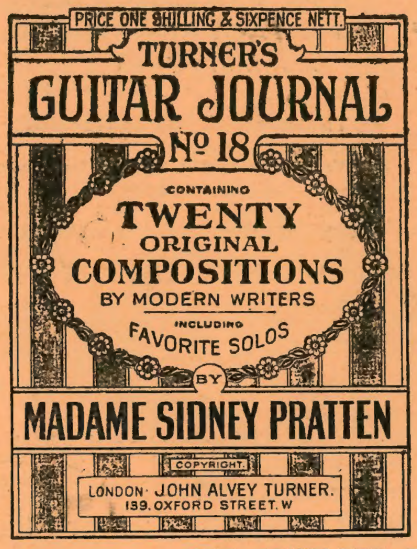
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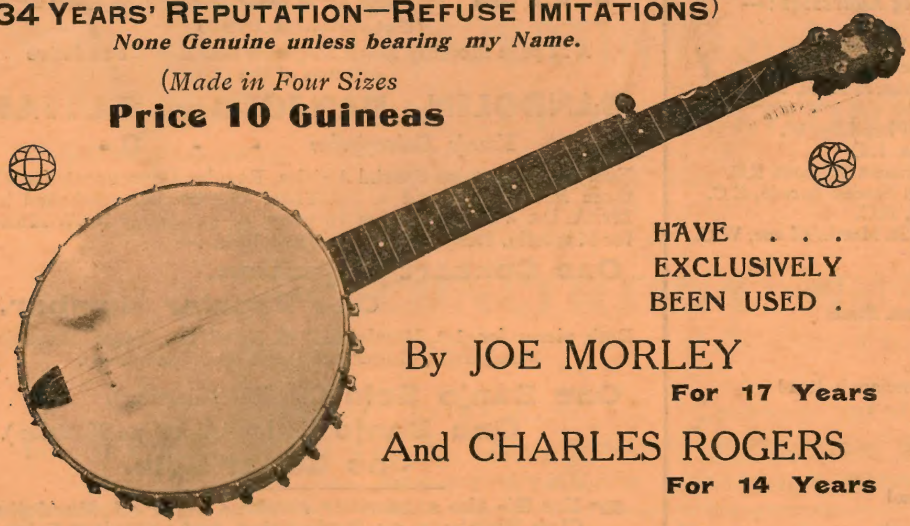

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